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7 July 1988

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: Charles E. Allen
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

SUBJECT: Development of Flexible Crisis Responses

1. Over the past several years, Fred Ikle has led an effort to develop a threat or crisis management strategy that attempts to control carefully any potential crises with the Soviets, moving away from heretofore all-or-nothing strategies for US force deployments. Albert Wohlstetter and his associate, Richard Brody of Pan Heuristics, Inc., have been consultants in this effort which includes review of US industrial mobilization strategy and capability to sustain war, new options for military deployments, logistical planning, and so forth.

2. This initial effort to explore a wider range of policy options using military forces foundered on DIA's insistence that a simple series of tit-for-tat, graduated responses was infeasible, if not foolhardy, because of the differences in the composition and mission of the US and Soviet forces, their capabilities and training doctrines, and difficulties in establishing specific intelligence indicators to activate US counter-responses with any confidence. Ikle's early suggestions were very specific. For example, if the Soviets flushed their bombers, he proposed that the US should match them on each occasion. DIA wisely reasoned against such a specific set of essentially reactive measures, but failed to offer an alternative strategy for correcting a longstanding weakness in US military planning.

3. Within the past two years, however, two developments have occurred in intelligence which have revived a variant of Ikle's proposals. The more important of the two has been in warning strategy; the other has been substantive, a combination of our deepening understanding of the Soviet process of preparing the nation and armed forces for war, plus new insights into the true state of Soviet military readiness in Eastern Europe. My predecessor, John Bird, and the National Warning Staff have demonstrated to key DoD, JCS, and NSC officers how these new insights can permit a warning strategy (or theology of warning as you term it) to support more aggressive collection and earlier threat management action that can make a difference in an adversary's planning before such plans have hardened into an irrevocable threat. The role of the NIO/W and the National Warning Staff essentially has been an enabling one, highlighting the kinds and quality of information US

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intelligence would receive at differing time periods in the development of a crisis. [redacted]

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4. Implementing documents on two separate DoD initiatives relevant to this activity are almost ready for Secretary Carlucci's signature: one involves mostly military responses, while the other is primarily devoted to enhancing industrial readiness and military sustainability. The former initiative by OSD/ISA will task the Intelligence Community to assess what US policy measures worked to influence or alter Soviet actions in past crises (such as Berlin in 1961) and then task J-5 to determine what the US can do now to achieve similar effects, within the most likely time frame the Soviets would take to mobilize and prepare their armed forces--four to six weeks. The second is a joint effort by the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense for Policy with some NSC support to produce a DoD instruction on Graduated Mobilization Response (GMR). This instruction directs DoD "to plan mobilization actions in incremental steps to permit reaction to early warning" and to proceed "with modulated responses to deter, mitigate or recover from a crisis . . . across a broad spectrum of contingencies." [redacted]

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5. I am continuing to support these DoD initiatives and have recently met with the OSD/NSC members sponsoring them. At the request of OSD, I and my staff will shortly begin a round of presentations on warning of war in Europe to educate further the DoD and NSC officials involved.


Charles E. Allen

cc: VC/NIC
NIO/GPF
NWS
A/NIO/W